

## Pedestrian Committee Meeting Notes 2-23-17

Present: Liza Cohen, Jodie Cohen-Tanugi, Debby Galef, Sean Peirce, Helen Rose, Sam Stern, Andrea Yoder, Stacey King (Harvard), Cara Seiderman (CDD), Brian McLane (DPW), Matt Nelson (Police)

### Agenda Review, minutes

- Approved, some discussion of the Inman sq meeting, and the different options for the redesign... see notes from Feb. 13 joint meeting sent out.

### Infrastructure discussion with Brian

- Porter Sq – changes at signals to improve operations; shopping center left turn will not be allowed, some reconfiguring at White Street and Somerville Ave movements... *(NB: was discussed previously at Ped Cttee; see early concepts [here](#))*
- Sidewalk work starting in March, Huron Ave., Mass Ave.
- **Snow** – Recent double storm meant they didn't move past plowing streets for cars until after the second storm, Monday night for bus stops...
- Sam gave an impassioned plea about how we need to have more equity in snow clearing that doesn't so obviously bias for cars over other modes of moving around. Ideas/Questions:
  - Can we do neighborhood shared snow-blowers?
  - Arlington, VA does community-owned snow-blowers
  - Supplemental charge to get your walk plowed/shoveled?
  - Concord, MA does city sidewalk shoveling *(NB: but they specifically refuse to expand sidewalks on additional streets because of the expectation that they would be cleared, so there are many streets without any sidewalks)*; Rochester, NY, Montreal (downtown primarily)
  - Kendall Sq area well cleared because of large businesses abutting most sidewalks
  - Fred Meyer – real estate agent - talked about getting groups of streets banded together to get a group rate for snow-shoveling...
  - City program for young matched w/ disabled & seniors...
  - Jodie: Pooling of water a real issue too, catch basins, often have cars over them, with plows blocking in the cars...
  - Check on whether the fines are being paid, \$50 per day on the fines...
  - Call elected officials to get DCR and MBTA to shovel their sidewalks...Jehlen, Hecht, Decker, Brownsberger, others?
  - Questions for John next month:
  - How do they determine which See/Click/Fix submissions they are going to look at? How do they determine they're going to respond to them?
  - Spacesavers? Is there "prosecutorial discretion"?
  - How do we get the message out to clear all the way out to the street at crosswalks/access ramps? Variable message signs – could they be used to remind people of proper clearing techniques?
  - Leo Roy – new DCR commissioner, seems like he understands the importance of pedestrians and walking, could we work with him?

## Wheeler Street Project Review

- Proximate roads are a concern. Wheeler Street and Concord Ave. – traffic studies show up to expected wait time of 2 minutes per car exiting from Wheeler onto Concord (left turn). Do we think motorists will yield for pedestrians?
- Entrance to Wheeler from Concord has rounded corners and no raised crosswalk, so cars enter/exit at speed, and motorists don't respect crosswalk across Wheeler on Concord
- Lack of connection to Terminal Street in plan.
- Roadway between Atmark buildings will be completed, connecting Wheeler to Fawcett Street. But likely need a signal at Fawcett/Concord because of the increased traffic volume?
- Some people have expressed opinion that ped/bike bridge over train tracks should be built before any more buildings get green light in Quadrangle side. It will lock in driving-centric patterns if the bridge isn't built...Reminder that this was proposed in the city's 2005 plan for the area – 12 years ago. However, the ped/bike bridge cost is \$20M+ and it would not be legal to prevent new buildings that are allowed under zoning.
- 55 Wheeler Street project is 550 Units – 500k sq feet, 2 buildings, behind Trader Joe's/CVS, 495 parking spaces below grade, 577 long-term / 55 short-term bike spots...
- 40k sq ft park (in flood plain section of site, so could that be built upon anyway?) with connections to bike/ped bridge...
- The traffic estimates for the project show modest increases on Fawcett Street, as there will be a new road connection. For most other roads, the study forecasts a decrease in traffic from the site, likely because of the switch from office to residential use?
- Project will worsen pedestrian delay (according to traffic study) along the entire West Concord Ave corridor
- Map on Page 36, Figure G.8 showed a connection between wheeler street and terminal road, but Sam was told that has gone away in new plans (via Doug Brown)...*(NB: if it is on someone else's property, the other property owner would need to consent)*
- Only proposed bike access mitigation is sharrows on Wheeler Street. No proposed bike facilities for Fawcett or Fawcett connector (Fawcett does not have bike lanes)
- No Hubway stations proposed

### Bottom line:

- Wheeler Street and Fawcett street are facing bad traffic scenarios
- Building puts added pressure on West concord ave corridor, and the traffic circles. Opportune time to reimagine the design of the shopping plazas to ease ped/bike travel through the area. Give people alternatives to car gridlock that exists at many hours of the day...
- Oh, and retailers don't shovel sidewalk on Wheeler street today, making ped travel even harder in winter...
- Projecting from other residential projects to get mode share for residential: 47% transit, 7.5% walk, 4% bike, 33% drive alone. Would love to see these numbers rerun with the bike/ped bridge in place...

## Pedestrian Committee Work

- Could we write a letter to the DCR commissioner regarding snow-related issues?

- Current path from Alewife T to the Route 2 businesses is critical for people who live and work there but it is not plowable due to DCR-required use of limited materials
  - Could we invite the commissioner to come to our June 10 walk? Or the preparatory walk?
  - Could we collect comments from the employees at Forrester, AC Hotel, residents at Vox on 2 about changing the path?
- Sidewalk/Path and Bridge along Alewife Brook Parkway and Fresh Pond Parkway are not cleared.
- Legislation – no one reviewed it – Cara reminds people to take a look if they are interested in the issues.
  - Ad hoc subcommittee with bike committee, review the legislative issues to determine if there is/are a position(s) to advances
  - Work with state elected officials (Brownsberger, and Hecht, Jehlen were named but there are others)
- Walk planning – some time in March we'll tour the Alewife area...Doodle is mostly filled out
  - Fill out the doodle poll everybody!
  - *Update: Date will be Friday, March 31, 3:30 PM – 5 PM. Meet at Alewife T Station, at wood benches on Steele Place (near Hubway Station).*
- Announcements from Matt/Police: Next week is White Ribbon pledge day – MENding Cambridge, mostly city employees, some folks from MIT, MENding Cambridge – public pledge at the hospital, reimagining masculinity for the 21<sup>st</sup> century...Wednesday is white ribbon day – wear white, take a picture...
 

<http://www.cambridgema.gov/citynewsandpublications/news/2017/02/cambridgecelebrateswhite-ribbon-day.aspx>

  - Searching for the new police commissioner...Public forums coming up next week – <http://www.cambridgema.gov/citynewsandpublications/news/2017/02/cambridgeannounces-public-forums-on-police-commissioner-search.aspx>
  - Thursday March 2 at the high school, Saturday, March 4 at the senior center on Mass Ave (across from city hall)
- Summer walks?
  - Volpe Center – East Cambridge for sure – July 27 - Sean can help out w/ the Volpe walk planning – Thanks Sean
  - Then pick another? Not sure where the other one would be –August one should start earlier in the evening so as not to run into darker hours. Decide later.